

As Zimbabwe marked Independence Day, MDC leader Nelson Chamisa said the independence dream has been shattered by Zanu PF tyranny, violence and corruption.

A comment on the Zimbabwe Situation website made a similar point: 'The Zanuvirus will continue to cause havoc just as it has done for 40 years since the infection took hold.'

Chamisa called for concerted efforts to remove Zanu PF from power, saying 'let's get the job done. Zimbabwe is too richly resourced to be this underdeveloped'. He urged Zimbabweans – wherever they are – to clap 40 times for change at 6 pm (see: <https://bulawayo24.com/news/national/183384>).

In the UK Zimbabweans have become accustomed to clapping at 8 pm on Thursdays to show their support for the National Health Service staff dealing with the coronavirus and some themselves dying from it. Among the victims this week was Rutendo Mukotsanjera, a single mother aged 45 who leaves a daughter Chichi, 12, orphaned with no family in the UK. Ms Mukotsanjera worshipped at the Renew Church in Utoxeter whose members are caring for Chichi and have raised more than £30,000 for her future.

Zimbabwe appears so far to have escaped lightly from the pandemic, although the future looks bleak despite President Mnangagwa repeating in his Independence Day message that

40 wasted years – Zimbabwe Vigil Diary: 18th April 2020

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 19 April 2020 12:45 -

Zimbabwe would be ‘an upper second’ economy’ by the end of the decade – laying himself open to a 20 year prison sentence he has threatened against anyone responsible for fake news!

What makes this aspiration even more unreal is a statement by the National Chamber of Commerce that a quarter of Zimbabwe’s formal jobs and three-quarters of informal ones would be wiped out by the impact of the infection. It predicted that the economy would contract by 9% this year (see: <https://bulawayo24.com/news/national/183589>).

The economy has not been helped by the government’s inept handling of bankrupt Air Zimbabwe which last week sent its employees on unpaid leave. Not surprising as a Boeing 777 acquired in January has only now taken its first flight for the airline – not a scheduled one but to Addis Ababa for maintenance . . . (See: <https://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/air-zimbabw-e-flies-boeing-777-to-maintenance-after-3-months-on-the-ground/>).

While the Boeing sat on the ground in Harare. The government spent hundreds of millions of dollars over budget on foreign travel expenses. They included hiring a private jet from Dubai to fly to Zimbabwe to take Mnangagwa on a 40 minute local trip (see: <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/04/ed-foreign-trips-bleed-treasury/>).

Other points

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- A former judge, now in exile in New Zealand, paints a bleak picture of dashed hopes for Zimbabwe (see: <https://bulawayo24.com/opinion/columnist/183647>).
- Because of the coronavirus we can no longer physically meet outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London, so we have started a virtual Vigil. We asked our activists to put on Vigil / ROHR / Zimbabwe regalia and take a photo of themselves holding an appropriate poster reflecting our protest against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The photos are uploaded on our Flickr site (see: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/albums/72157713953468088>). Our virtual Vigil activist today was Jacob Mandipira who kindly contributed to Vigil funds. Jacob's message on Independence Day was: 'Zimbabwe independence what a shame! 40 years of hell under the Zanu PF rule. The mass is suffering big time'.
- For Vigil pictures check: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zimbabwevigil/> . Please note: Vigil photos can only be downloaded from our Flickr website.

NOTICES:

- **The Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR)** is the Vigil's partner organization based in Zimbabwe. ROHR grew out of the need for the Vigil to have an organization on the ground in Zimbabwe which reflected the Vigil's mission statement in a practical way. ROHR in the UK actively fundraises through membership subscriptions, events, sales etc to support the activities of ROHR in Zimbabwe. Please note that the official website of ROHR Zimbabwe is <http://www.rohrzimbabwe.org/>. Any other website claiming to be the official website of ROHR in no way represents us.
- **The Vigil's book 'Zimbabwe Emergency'** is based on our weekly diaries. It records how events in Zimbabwe have unfolded as seen by the diaspora in the UK. It chronicles the economic disintegration, violence, growing oppression and political manoeuvring – and the tragic human cost involved. It is available at the Vigil. All proceeds go to the Vigil and our sister organisation the Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe's work in Zimbabwe. The book is also available from Amazon.
- **Facebook pages:**
 - Vigil: <https://www.facebook.com/zimbabwevigil>
 - ROHR: <https://www.facebook.com/Restoration-of-Human-Rights-ROHR-Zimbabwe-International-370825706588551/>
 - ZAF: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Action-Forum-ZAF/490257051027515>